

## On and around “double-subject sentences” in Malagasy and Malagasy Sign Language (TTM)

マダガスカル語およびマダガスカル手話における  
「二重主語構文」とその周辺について

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キーワード: マダガスカル語、マダガスカル手話、二重主語文、擬似二重主語文、三重主語文、斜格的裸名詞句、不定目的語、逆受動、交通・移動の手段、存在文



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## Abstract

The most important question in this paper is whether Malagasy has a double-subject construction. Malagasy has a construction which can be called a pseudo-double-subject construction, but it differs from double-subject constructions in languages which have double-subject construction. In the course of researching the pseudo-double-subject construction in Malagasy and related phenomena, it was made clear that bare (i.e. caseless and determinerless) noun phrase is the key to all these constructions. The bare noun phrases right after the predicate are all indefinite in Malagasy by form and definition. They are classified into indefinite object, indefinite means of transportation/motion, indefinite core nominal in the existential construction, and semantic possessee in pseudo-double-subject construction. The bare noun phrases can be interpreted to have oblique properties. The obliqueness of the bare noun phrase varies from seemingly just atypical subject (or core nominal) in existential construction to indefinite object, which is oblique in the sense that it is a demoted patient in seemingly antipassive construction, obviously oblique indefinite means of transportation/motion, and semantic possessee in pseudo-double-subject construction. On the other hand, Malagasy Sign Language (TTM) has even a triple-subject sentence on top of double-subject sentences unlike Malagasy.

## 要旨

本項における最も重要な疑問は、マダガスカル語が二重主語文を持つか否かである。マダガスカル語は擬似二重主語文と呼べるものを持っているが、これは他の言語の二重主語文とは違う特性を持っている。マダガスカル語の擬似二重主語文とその周辺の諸現象を探る過程で、格と限定詞を持たない裸名詞句が諸構文に共通の鍵であることが明らかになった。述語直後の裸名詞句は全て形において、また定義において不定である。裸名詞句は、不定目的語、交通・移動の手段、存在文における存在物の項、擬似二重主語文における意味的な被所有者に分類できる。裸名詞句は斜格的属性を持っていると解釈できる。裸名詞句の斜格性は、存在文の非原型的主語（あるいは必須項）、他動詞文（目的語ボイス文）から逆受動文（動作者ボイス文）を派生する際に降格されるという意味で斜格的な不定目的語、単純明快に斜格的である交通・移動の手段、擬似二重主語文における意味的な被所有者など、多様である。他方、マダガスカル手話 (TTM) は、二重主語文に留まらず、三重主語文も持つことで、マダガスカル語とは一線を画している。

## Introduction

A Japanese sentence, *Zoo wa hana ga nagai*<sup>1)</sup> (Elephants have a long trunk), has been called a double-subject sentence by some linguists including Onoe (2004)<sup>2)</sup>.

- (1) Zoo           wa       hana    ga       nagai  
Elephant    TOP<sup>3)</sup>   nose    NOM   long  
'Elephants have a long trunk (nose)'

At a quick glance, Malagasy seems to have a similar construction:

- (2) Lava    orona    ilay/ny=    elefanta  
long    nose    the/the=    elephant  
'Elephants have a long trunk (nose)'

In this paper, it will be shown that (2) and other similar sentences in Malagasy cannot be considered double-subject sentences and they should be given a different label.

## 1. Double-subject sentences in other languages

In this section, the examples of double-subject sentences will be given from Japanese (1.1.), Bahasa Indonesia (1.2.), and Mandarin Chinese (1.3.).

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- 1) In this paper, Japanese is romanized in Hattori System for the examples and in Hepburn System for the other cases.
- 2) An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the label "double-subject constructions" is not a readily understandable category in the field of linguistic typology. In the three languages I referred to in the section 1. have linguists who use the term (or a term roughly equivalent to it) to refer to some grammatical phenomena in each language. When the present writer or some other persons want to try to make the term usable for larger-scale cross-linguistic comparison, they need to refine the definition of the term and to demonstrate its effectiveness and its limits in cross-linguistic comparison. I will pass this task on to future me or some other persons. The readers are asked to understand that the present paper is only a preliminary and limited cross-linguistic study on the subject.
- 3) Abbreviations are: - (affix boundary), = (clitic boundary), ≠ (subclitic boundary), + (word boundary), 3A (third-person agent), 3P (third-person patient), 3S (third-person subject), 3SG (third-person singular), ABM (ablative-modal), ABS (absolute), ACC (accusative), ANTIPASS (antipassive), GEN (genitive), GN (genitive-noun (order)), IMP (imperative), INCEP (inceptive), IND (indicative), INST (instrumental), ITER (iterative), LK (linker), LOC (locative), NG (noun-genitive (order)), NOM (nominative), NP (noun phrase), OBL (oblique), OV (object voice), PCL (particle), PF (perfect(ive)), PN (personal name/place name), POSS (possessive), PP (prepositional/postpositional phrase), PRED (predicate), REFL (reflexive), REL (relative), SG (singular), SUBJ (subject), TOP (topic), TTM (tenin'ny tanana malagasy, Malagasy Sign Language), VM (valency marker), VOA (voa-object voice).

## 1. 1. Double-subject sentences in Japanese

Onoe (ibid.) has 1<sup>st</sup>-category double-subject sentences and 2<sup>nd</sup>-category double-subject sentences. The 1<sup>st</sup>-category double-subject sentences are further subcategorized into emotional sentences (jôibun), occurrence sentences (shuttaibun), and existential sentences (sonzaibun). This paper deals with existential sentences (sonzaibun) from the 1<sup>st</sup>-category double-subject sentences (2.3.) and also the 2<sup>nd</sup>-category double-subject sentences<sup>4</sup>(2.4.). Here is an example of existential sentence (1<sup>st</sup>-category double-subject sentence):

- (3) Kono heya wa ookina mado ga aru  
this room TOP big window NOM exist  
‘This room has a big window’

Existential sentences have the verb meaning *aru* (exist) as the predicate. On top of that, sentences with the predicate *iru* ((animate) exist), *iru* (need), *tariru* (suffice), etc. are also counted as existential sentences (Onoe ibid.). In (3), The locus *kono heya* (this room) is only followed by *wa* (TOP) and is not marked with a case particle for the locative case.

In a 2<sup>nd</sup>-category double-subject sentence like (4), possessive relation *zoo no hana* (elephant GEN trunk) can be felt but is not encoded as such. Instead of the possessive marking, the possessor is marked with the topic particle while the possessee is marked with the nominative particle.

- (4) Zoo wa hana ga nagai (= 1)  
Elephant TOP nose NOM long  
‘Elephants have a long trunk (nose)’

From the topic-comment (theme-rheme in functional sentence perspective (FSP)) point of view, Kamei et al. (1995: 126) explains that *zoo wa* (elephant TOP) is the topic (theme) and *hana ga nagai* (nose NOM long) is the comment (rheme) of the sentence.

Going back to Onoe (2004), he states that *kono heya* (this room) (3) and *zoo* (elephant) (1) have the properties of a topic, but they have the properties of a subject at the same time. Likewise, *ookina mado* (big window) (3) and *hana* (nose/trunk) (1) have the properties of a subject.

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4) Emotional sentences (jôibun) and occurrence sentences (shuttaibun) from the 1st-category double-subject sentences (Onoe 2004) are not dealt with in this paper since these subcategories seem irrelevant to the discussion of Malagasy grammar and TTM grammar. Moreover, true double-subject sentences are not found in Malagasy, but it has pseudo-double-subject sentences.

## 1. 2. Double-subject sentences in Bahasa Indonesia

Furihata (2006) has following examples for double-subject sentences:

- (5) Wanita itu rambut-nya panjang sekali  
Woman that hair-POSS long very  
‘That woman has very long hair’

- (6) Buku ini harga-nya Rp 35,000  
Book this price-POSS rupiah 35,000  
‘This book’s price is 35,000 rupiah’

One can notice right away that the “second subjects” in (5, 6) have *-nya* (-POSS). In Onoe’s (2004) terms, you can state that the possessee or the second subject is marked with the possessive *-nya* (POSS) in Bahasa Indonesia’s double-subject sentences.

## 1. 3. Double-subject sentences in Chinese

Liu (2010) discusses double subjects in Mandarin Chinese.

- (7) Wǒ yāo téng  
I back ache  
‘My back aches’

Liu states that *wǒ* (I) and *yāo* (back) are the two subjects in this example. One can readily try to refute this interpretation by saying that *wǒ yāo* (my back??) is in possessive construction without the genitive *de* (GEN), which can be interpreted as no-marking possessive construction. But Liu states that the possessive connection between *wǒ* (I) and *yāo* (back) is weaker than when *de* (GEN) is present as in *wǒ de yāo* (I GEN back).

The same kind of interpretational ambiguity can be stated for the following example.

- (8) Zhōngguó jīngjì chíchù fāzhǎn  
China economy continuously develop  
‘Chinese economy continuously develops’

Some linguists would probably interpret *Zhōngguó jīngjì* (China economy) as a no-marking possessive construction without the genitive marker *de*. But Liu again states that *Zhōngguó* (China) and *jīngjì* (economy) are the two subjects in this example.

Furthermore, Liu (ibid.) analyzes the examples as a nesting structure.

- (9) Wǒ yāo téng (= 7)  
I back ache  
SUBJ PRED \_\_\_\_\_ (root clause)  
SUBJ PRED (inner clause)  
‘My back aches’

Liu (ibid.) analyzes that *wǒ* (I) is the subject of the root clause while *yāo téng* (back ache)’ is the predicate of the root clause. On the other hand, Liu analyzes the predicate of the root clause into *yāo* (back) as the subject of the nested (inner) clause and *téng* (ache) as the predicate of the nested (inner) clause.

In the same way, (8) is analyzed also as a nesting structure:

- (10) Zhōngguó jīngjì chíchù fāzhǎn (= 8)  
China economy continuously develop  
SUBJ PRED \_\_\_\_\_ (root clause)  
SUBJ PRED (inner clause)  
‘Chinese economy continuously develops’

Liu (ibid.) analyzes that *Zhōngguó* (China) is the subject of the root clause while *jīngjì chíchù fāzhǎn* (economy continuously develop) is the predicate of the root clause. On the other hand, Liu analyzes the predicate of the root clause into *jīngjì* (economy) as the subject of the nested (inner) clause and *fāzhǎn* (develop) as the predicate of the nested (inner) clause.

In both (7) and (8), some linguists probably would interpret the first two words of the examples as forming a no-marking possessive construction. In the following examples, such interpretation is not possible as presented by Liu (ibid.).

- (11) Xiǎo Wáng sǐ le fùqin  
Little Wang die PF father  
‘As for Ms./Mr. Wang, Father died *or* Father died on Ms./Mr. Wang’

This example is called existential-presentational sentence (存現文) in the Chinese grammar where the non-topical subject *fùqin* (father) of the intransitive predicate verb follows the verb and the topical subject *Xiǎo Wáng* (Little Wang) precedes the predicate verb according to Liu (ibid.).

- (12) Tā hóng le liǎn  
(S)he red PF face  
‘Her/his face blushed *or* (s)he blushed in her/his face’

This is also an example of existential-presentational sentence where the non-topical subject *liǎn* (face) of the intransitive predicate verb follows the verb and the topical subject *tā* ((s)he) precedes the

predicate verb. These examples can be analyzed as nesting structures just like for (9, 10) too according to Liu (ibid.).

- (13) Xiǎo Wáng sǐ le fùqin (= 11)  
 Little Wang die PF father  
 SUBJ \_\_\_\_\_ PRED \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 PRED           SUBJ  
 ‘As for Ms./Mr. Wang, Father died’

- (14) Tā hóng le liǎn (=12)  
 (S)he red PF face  
 SUBJ PRED \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 PRED           SUBJ  
 ‘Her/his face blushed’

## 2. Pseudo-double-subject sentences and related sentences in Malagasy

Is it possible to say something like Japanese *zoo wa hana ga nagai* (elephant TOP nose NOM long) in Malagasy? The answer is yes and no. On the “yes” side, you can find similar sentences, e.g. (15):

- (15) Lava orona ilay/ny= elefanta<sup>5)</sup> (= 2)  
 Long nose the/the= elephant  
 ‘Elephants have a long trunk lit. as for the elephants, noses are long’

At a quick glance, (15) looks like a double-subject sentence. But it is not. As you can notice, *elefanta* (elephant) has to have a definite determiner. The most unmarked definite determiner is *ny=*. *Ilay* is also used and it seems to have a stronger deictic or anaphoric power than *ny=*, but less deictic power than the demonstratives like *io* (that) etc. The example (15) is not a double-subject sentence since the *orona* (nose) has no definite determiner like *ny* or *ilay* to form a complete sentence.

- (16) Lava ny= oron≠ilay elefanta  
 Long the=nose≠the elephant  
 ‘The elephant’s trunk is long’

In (16), *oron≠ilay elefanta* (nose≠the elephant) is a possessive construction which means “the elephant’s trunk (nose).” You can see the definite determiner *ny=* in front of the *oron(a)* (nose). You cannot do away with a definite determiner if a noun or a regular noun phrase is the subject<sup>6)</sup>. Therefore, the

5) I consulted my language consultant, M<sup>me</sup> Raivo Toyoda in March, 2021 in Tokyo. The Malagasy data are from this field research.

6) There are cases where a noun phrase in this position does not require an external determiner, i.e. in the case of personal names starting with Ra- (e.g. Rasoa) and Andria- (e.g. Andrianampoinimerina), these prefixes are considered determiners while the prefix An- in place names (e.g. Antananarivo) is likewise considered a determiner.

following (17, 18) are ungrammatical since they do not have a definite determiner for their potential subjects.

- (17) \*Lava oron≠ilay elefanta  
Long nose≠the elephant

- (18) \*Lava orona  
Long nose

This is different from the situation in Japanese and *orona/oron≠ilay elefanta* (trunk/elephant's trunk) (17, 18) without a determiner cannot be considered any kind of subjects. This situation will be revisited in the section 2.4.

- (19) Zoo wa hana ga nagai (= 1, 4)  
Elephant TOP nose NOM long  
'Elephants have a long trunk (nose)'

In Japanese, both *wa* (TOP) and *ga* (NOM) can (but not always) mark a subject. *Wa* (TOP) is used when the subject is a topic; *ga* (NOM) is used when the subject is not a topic.

- (20) Hana ga nagai  
"The nose is long"

The example (20) is a perfect sentence in Japanese unlike (18) in Malagasy.

- (21) Hana ga takai desu ne, otoosan!  
Nose NOM high COP PCL, father!  
'Father, you are proud (of your daughter/son etc.), aren't you?'

The vocative-like *otoosan* (father) does not refer to the speaker's father, but it refers to the interlocutor who is a father of somebody.

- (22) Lava orona ilay/ny= elefanta (= 2, 15)  
Long nose the/the= elephant  
'Elephants have a long trunk lit. as for the elephants, noses are long'

*Ilay elefanta* (the elephant) or *ny= elefanta* (the= elephant) is the subject of the sentence while *orona* (nose) without a determiner is not a subject in Malagasy. Moriyama (2003) was hesitant of calling both the elements subjects. He called the equivalent of our *orona* (nose) here "theme (shudai)." It is very difficult to name this bare noun phrase anything, of which the situation Moriyama was aware. But it is not a topic in the topic/comment contrast. What about theme? Theme is supposed to be a technical term,



but unfortunately it is polysemous<sup>7)</sup>. In any case, what we do not even have a name so far is not included in the polysemy of the term “theme.”

A bare noun phrase that comes right after the predicate is used for several purposes. We will come back to (2=15=22) in the section 2.4. In the following sections, subclasses of constructions where a bare noun phrase follows the predicate just like in (2=15=22), are examined (2.1.-2.5.).

## 2. 1. A bare noun phrase following the predicate (indefinite object)

Some bare noun phrases right after the predicate verbs are indefinite objects. The following examples (23, 24, 27-30) have a predicate verb *mihinana* (eat).

(23) *Mihinana*<sup>8)</sup> vary ny= ankizy  
Eat rice the= child  
‘The child(ren) eat(s) rice’

(24) *Mihinam*≠bary ny= ankizy  
Eat≠rice the= child  
‘The child(ren) eat(s) rice’

The example (23) has a bare-noun object *vary* (rice). *Mihinana vary* (eat rice) in (23) undergo optional phonological adjustments<sup>9)</sup> and renders *mihinam*≠bary (eat≠rice) in (24). The (23) and the (24) can be used almost interchangeably. But (24) may have a stronger implication that the event is habitual. Nonetheless, it does not suggest that such phonological adjustments are obligatory for habitual meaning since the phonological adjustments (for verb plus noun) can take place only when the preceding verb ends in *ka*, *tra*, or *na*. The *ka*, *tra*, or *na* are not morphemes. The words ending in *ka*, *tra*, or *na* end in *k*, *t/r*, or *n* respectively in the underlying level and a paragogic *a* appears to secure an open syllable at the end of the words at the surface level. It is possible to interpret (24) as a form of noun incorporation, but I prefer not to do so since phonological conditions play more important role than semantic conditions, i.e. if the verb does not end in *ka*, *tra*, or *na*, the phonological adjustments do not take place even when the meaning of the predicate verb is habitual. I placed a subclitic boundary (≠) between *mihinam* (eat)

7) You can think of theme in theme/rheme (topic/comment). Theme can be used for something similar to but different from stem. The name “thematic vowel” is related to that area of terminology. Moreover, thematic vowel can be called theme too. In recent years, theme is also the name for a semantic role.

8) Malagasy verbs have up to three voice forms: actor voice (or active voice), object voice (or passive voice), and circumstantial voice (or relative voice). The verb forms in this paper are in the actor voice form unless otherwise noted.

9) The phonological adjustment is called *fikamban-teny* meaning unification of words in Malagasy. It is a kind of external sandhi.

and *bary* (rice). It means that *mihinam*≠*bary* (eat≠rice) are two syntactic words, ≠*bary* being a subclitic (junsetsugo) in accordance with Miyaoka (2015). A subclitic (junsetsugo) marked with “≠” is distinguished from a clitic which is marked with “=” in Miyaoka (ibid.). Clitics are always clitics. On the other hand, subclitics are phonologically altered forms of free forms by the phonological adjustments in Malagasy. In the case of *mihinam*≠*bary* (eat≠rice) both *mihinam* (eat) and ≠*bary* (≠rice) show results of phonological adjustments. In this case, the dependent ≠*bary* (≠rice) is considered the subclitic while *mihinam* (eat) is considered the host.

- (25) Misotro      ronono    ny=      anakizy  
          Drink        milk      the=     child  
          ‘The child(ren) drink(s) milk’

The (25) cannot undergo a similar phonological adjustments like in (24) since the verb *misotro* (drink) does not end in *ka*, *tra*, or *na*. This sentence can be interpreted either with a habitual meaning or a present progressive meaning.

- (26) Misotro      ronono    ny=      ray      aman=dreni=ko  
          Drink        milk      the=     father   OBL=mother=my  
          ‘My parents are retired lit. my father with mother drink milk’

*Misotro ronono* (drink milk) has a lexicalized compound meaning “be retired.” Even in this case, the similar phonological adjustments do not take place because the phonological conditions are not met. This same sentence can literally mean “my parents drink milk” too. You can see that not only habitual meaning but also lexicalized meaning do not cause phonological adjustments when the phonological conditions are not met.

We go back to examples with *mihinana* (eat).

- (27)Mihinana      katsaka      ny=      anakizy  
          Eat            corn        the=     child  
          ‘The child(ren) eat(s) corn’

- (28) \*Mihinan≠katsaka      ny=      anakizy  
          Eat≠corn                    the=     child

M<sup>mc</sup> Raivo stated that (28) with the similar phonological adjustments like (24) is not possible to render habitual meaning. It is perhaps possible in the areas in Madagascar where rice is scarce and corn is one of the main staples and the local dialect has similar phonological adjustment rules like in the standard Malagasy at the same time.

- (29) Mihinana fanafody ny ankizy  
Eat medicine the child  
'The child(ren) take(s) medicine'

- (30) Mihinam≠panafody ny ankizy  
Eat≠medicine the child(ren)  
'The child(ren) take(s) medicine'

Medicine is not food nor staple, but in (30), the phonological adjustment renders *mihinam≠panafody* (eat≠medicine). Probably it suggests that taking medicine can be habitual.

- (31) Manana orona lava ny= elefanta  
Have nose long the= elephant  
'The elephant has a long trunk'

- (32) Manana saka ity trano ity  
Have cat this house this  
'This house has a cat/cats'

- (33) Manana saka ilay trano  
Have cat the house  
'The house has a cat/cats'

The examples (31-33) are sentences with a predicate verb *manana* (have). Their subjects are definite. In (31), the definite *elefanta* (elephant) is preceded by the definite article *ny=* (the=). In (32), the *trano* (house) is sandwiched by the two demonstratives *ity* (this). In (33), the *trano* (house) is preceded by the definite article *ilay*. On the other hand, the objects *orona* (nose) in (31) and *saka* (cat) in (32, 33) are indefinite bare nouns without either a determiner or a case marker.

- (34) Manana harena Raso (cf. fn. 6)  
Have wealth PN  
'Raso has wealth (other than money)'

- (35) Manan≠karena Raso  
Have≠wealth PN  
'Raso is wealthy (money-wise)'

The examples (34) and (35) are a pair of the sentences with the same words without the phonological adjustments (34) and with the phonological adjustments (35). M<sup>me</sup> Raivo suggested that both means "Raso is wealthy," but (35) is more about money and (34) is more about other wealth than money.

The following example (36) is a sort of a cleft sentence with the subject *izaho* (I) placed at the beginning of the sentence. The *izaho* (I) followed by the particle *dia* is a contrastive subject. The object noun phrase *ray mpandrafitra* (father carpenter) is made of two nouns in apposition.

- (36) Izaho    dia<sup>10)</sup>    manana    ray    mpandrafitra  
I           PCL    have          father   carpenter  
‘“I” have a father who is a carpenter’

The following examples (37-42) have the predicate verb *manoratra* (write).

- (37) Manoratra    taratasy    ny= sakaiza  
Write           letter        the=friend  
‘The friend writes a letter’

- (38) Manora≠taratasy            ny= sakaiza  
Write≠letter                    the=friend  
‘The friend writes letters’

The bare noun object *taratasy* (letter) is not marked for number, but the plural “letters” is given in the translation of (38) to make it sound more habitual.

- (39) Manoratra    hira    ny=    mpanan≠talenta  
Write           song    the=    the.one.who.has≠talent  
‘The talented person composes a song’

- (40) Manora≠kira            ny=    mpanan≠talenta  
Write≠song                the=    the.one.who.has≠talent  
‘The talented person composes songs’

Likewise, the plural “songs” is given in the translation of (40) to make it sound more habitual. By the way, *mpanan* (the.one.who.has) in the *mpanan≠talenta* (the.one.who.has≠talent) is the result of actor nominalization from *manana* (have) with the prefix *mp-*.

- (41) Manoratra    tsiambaratelo    ny=    pôlisy/mpisolovava  
Write           secret            the=    policeman/attorney  
‘The policeman/attorney writes secret’

- (42) \*Manora≠tsiambaratelo            ny=    pôlisy/mpisolovava  
Write≠secret                            the=    policeman/attorney

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10) The particle *dia* allows the subject to be placed at the beginning of the sentence. The subject in that position expresses contrast.

Writing secrets can be habitual in my opinion, but M<sup>mc</sup> Raivo rejected (42).

The following examples (43-46) have the predicate verb *maka* (take). There is one thing which should be clearly stated, i.e. although the verb *maka* (take) ends in *ka*, this verb cannot undergo the phonological adjustments. One of the reasons is that the second vowel in *maka* (take) is not a paragodic vowel which has been inserted between the underlying level and the surface level, but is a genuine vowel which never gets eroded. Since there are no alternations between the phonologically adjusted form and the form without such phonological adjustments, the habitual reading and the non-habitual reading are both possible in most of the cases.

- (43) Maka    sary    ilay/ny=    mpizaha    tany  
Take    picture    the/the=    seeker    land  
'The tourists take pictures'

- (44) Maka    trondro    ny=    mpanjono/tantsaha  
Take    fish    the=    fisher/rural.resident  
'The fisher(s)/rural resident(s) fish(es)'

Both (43) and (44) can describe habitual and non-habitual picture taking and fishing.

- (45) Maka    bahana    ny=    kolikoly  
Take    place    the    corruption  
'The corruption takes place'

- (46) Maka    anjara    amin=ny=    kabary    ny=    solombavambahoaka  
Take    part    OBL=the=    speech    the=    member.of.the.parliament  
'The member of the parliament takes part in the speech'

Whether *maka bahana* (take place) and *maka anjara* (take part) are loan translations/calques from European languages or not is a question which can be posed, but I will not try to answer it for the time being since it is not relevant to the present discussion.

I wanted examples where both the agent and the patient are definite. Such cases are described in Moriyama (2003) etc. M<sup>mc</sup> Raivo seems to be more comfortable using object-voice (= passive-voice) sentences for such cases than using actor-voice (= active voice) sentences.

- (47) Manampy    antitra    ny=    mponina  
Help    old    the=    inhabitant  
'The inhabitants help old people'

The example above (47) is an actor-voice sentence with a definite agent *mponina* (inhabitant) and an indefinite patient *antitra* (old (people)). If you want both the arguments to be definite, M<sup>mc</sup> Raivo prefers

to use its object-voice counterpart (48) than just inserting a definite article in front of the indefinite patient in (47).

- (48) Ampy-an#ny= mponina ny= antitra  
Help-OV#the= inhabitant the= old  
‘The old people are helped by the inhabitants *or* as for the old people, the inhabitants help them’

This sort of preference of M<sup>me</sup> Raivo’s seems to support the analysis that the patient in an actor-voice sentence is overwhelmingly indefinite and that the object-voice counterpart is preferred if the patient is definite.

## 2. 2. A bare noun phrase following the predicate (indefinite means)

- (49) Mandeha lamasinina/tongotra Rasoa  
Go train/foot PN  
‘Rasoa goes on a train/on foot’

Means of transportation/motion can be a bare noun phrase that comes right after the predicate verb. This is described in Moriyama’s (2003) grammar, but I got more examples from M<sup>me</sup> Raivo.

- (50) Mandeha fiarakodia/fiaramanidina/kalesa/sarety Rasoa  
Go car/plane/kickboard/ox.cart PN  
‘Rasoa goes in a car/on a plane/on a kickboard/on an ox cart’

- (51) Mandeha soavaly/môtô/taxibe/taxi borosy Rasoa  
Go horse/motorbike/bus/taxi brousse PN  
‘Rasoa goes on a horse/on a motorbike/on a bus/on a taxi brousse’

In these examples (49-51), the “means” nominals are bare noun phrases without a case marking, but semantically speaking, they denote “means” and they are oblique. The phonological adjustments do not take place in these examples since *mandeha* (go) does not end in *ka*, *tra*, or *na*.

## 2. 3. A bare noun phrase following the predicate (existential sentences)

Another category where a bare noun phrase can follow the predicate verb is existential sentences with the predicate verb *misy* (exist). The bare noun phrase can be considered a bare core nominal without case marking nor definite marking. Cross-linguistic and theoretical implications of the bare noun phrase in the existential sentences will be elaborated in the subsection 2.5.

- (52) Misy varavarankely lehibe ity efitra ity  
Exist window big this room this  
‘This room has a big window’

The example (52) has a noun phrase *ity efitra ity* (this room this) as the subject in the bare case (= nominative case). The English translation has the verb *has*, but the corresponding Malagasy verb is *misy* (exist/be) but not *manana* (have) like in the examples (31-35). Moreover, the example above (52) can be analyzed as having case-wise unmarked (i.e. nominative) subject *ity efitra ity* (this room this) and a case-wise and definiteness-wise unmarked object *varavarankely* (window). This analysis matches the analyses in 2.1. where other semantically diverse verbs have a definite subject and an unmarked indefinite object. This analysis does not hold for the following examples in this subsection (53-58) where the locus is marked as locus unlike in (52) where the locus is just a nominative noun phrase.

- (53) Misy    varavarankely    lehibe    ato    an-efitra  
Exist    window            big        here    ACC-room  
'Here in the room there is a big window'

The example (53) is similar to (52), but instead of the subject *ity efitra ity* (this room this), it has a locative phrase *ato an-efitra* (here ACC-room) at the end of the sentence of the type (56c) below. Then it means that the sentence does not have a definite subject unlike (52). The *varavarankely* (window) cannot be called a subject since it is not marked definite. Therefore, it is probably right to state that a sentence like (53) lacks a prototypical subject.

The following examples (52, 53) are not existential sentences and the *varavarankely* (window) is preceded by the definite article.

- (54) Lehibe    ny=    varavarankely    ato    amin=ity    efitra    ity  
Big        the=    window            here    OBL=this    room    this  
'Here in this room, the window is big'

- (55) Lehibe    ny=    varavarankely    ato    an-efitra  
Big        the=    window            here    ACC-room  
'Here in the room, the window is big'

Both *ato amin=ity efitra ity* (here OBL=this room this) (54) and *ato an-efitra* (here ACC-room) (55) are locative phrases. In Malagasy, locative phrases take one of the following three formulae:

- (56) a. locative demonstrative plus place name as in *eto Madagasikara*  
(here Madagascar = here in Madagascar)  
b. locative demonstrative plus *amin=* (OBL) plus definite noun phrase as in *ato amin=ity efitra ity*  
(here OBL=this room this = here in this room)  
c. locative demonstrative plus *an-* (ACC) plus bare noun phrase as in *ato an-efitra*  
(here ACC-room = here in the room)

Back to existential sentences (57, 58):

- (57) Misy saka ato amin=ity trano ity  
Exist cat here OBL=this house this  
‘Here in this house, there is a cat/are cats’

This example (57) has an indefinite noun *saka* (cat), which is in existence, followed by a locative phrase of the type (56b).

- (58) Misy nosy kely maro aty/any Japana  
Exist island small many here/there Japan  
‘Here/there in Japan, there are many small islands’

This example (58) has an indefinite noun phrase *nosy kely* (island small), which is in existence, followed by a locative phrase of the type (56a). Going back to Onoe (2004), these examples (52, 53, 57, 58), but especially (52) without the locative marking, correspond to the existential sentences (*sonzaibun*) from the 1<sup>st</sup>-category double-subject sentences in Japanese. In Japanese, the core nominals which denote what is in existence are marked with non-topic *ga*. In Malagasy, such core nominals appear as bare noun phrases without a definite marker nor a case marker. Both in Malagasy and in Japanese, the core nominals which denote what is in existence are not marked for definiteness nor topicality. When what is in existence is definite, a different construction is employed as in (59):

- (59) Ao ny= mompera (Takumi Moriyama p.c.)  
There the= priest  
‘The priest is there’

## 2. 4. A bare noun phrase following the predicate (pseudo-double-subject sentences)

There is another category in which a bare noun phrase follows the predicate, which I call pseudo-double-subject sentences. This is a construction which looks like double-subject sentences at a quick glance. Already in the section 2., it is stated that a sentence like the following is not a double-subject sentence (60):

- (60) Lava orona ilay/ny= elefanta (= 2, 15, 22)  
Long nose the/the= elephant  
‘Elephants have a long trunk lit. as for the elephants, noses are long’

The possessive relation between the *elefanta* (elephant) and *orona* (nose) is felt like in Onoe’s (2004) 2<sup>nd</sup>-category double subject sentences, Furihata’s Bahasa Indonesia examples (5, 6), and Liu’s Chinese examples (7, 8, 11, 12), but the possessive relation is not linguistically encoded as such in this sentence like in Japanese (1.1), Bahasa Indonesia (1.2.), and Chinese (1.3.). The *elefanta* (elephant) has a definite determiner, so it is just to call it a subject. But the *orona* cannot be called a subject because it



is not marked definite. It is just a bare noun phrase following the predicate. If you want to state that the “elephant’s trunk is long” while expressing the possessive relation, you get:

- (61) Lava    ny        oron≠ilay    elefanta (= 16)  
Long    the        nose≠the    elephant  
‘The elephant’s trunk is long’

You get *oron≠ilay elefanta* (nose≠the elephant) in possessive construction which is preceded by a definite article *ny*= (the=) to rightly make it the subject of the predicate *lava* (long). The subject of the predicate *lava* (long) has to be definite, which is demonstrated by the ungrammatical examples (62, 63):

- (62) \*Lava    oron≠ilay    elefanta (= 17)  
Long    nose≠the    elephant

- (63) \*Lava    orona    (= 18)  
Long    nose

The bare noun phrases have been shown to be used for indefinite object (2.1.), indefinite means (of transportation/motion) (2.2.), and indefinite core nominal in existential construction (2.3.). Then the *orona* (nose) in (60) can be considered an indefinite oblique nominal without case marking. Then the direct translation of (60) should be something like “the elephant is nose-wise long” in an effort to make the bare noun phrase sound like an oblique phrase. This bare noun phrase is somewhat similar to the Russian prepositional phrase with the preposition *po* (by) in meaning.

- (64) Kto        vy        po        nacional’nosti? (Russian)  
Who    you    by        nationality<sup>11)</sup>  
‘What is your nationality lit. who are you by the nationality/nationality-wise’

Russian *po nacional’nosti* (by nationality/nationality-wise) is overtly obliquely marked by the preposition *po*. On the other hand, Malagasy examples in this section has something like case-wise and definiteness-wise unmarked bare nominals. The unmarked bare nominals can be considered unmarked oblique nominals in line with indefinite object (2.1.), indefinite means (of transportation/motion) (2.2.), and indefinite core nominal in existential construction (2.3.). The similarities among these constructions will be elaborated in 2.5.

- (65) Maranitra    sofina    ny=    saka  
Keen        ear        the=    cat  
‘Cats have keen ears lit. the cats are ear-wise keen’

---

11) In Russian context, *nacional’nost’* (nationality) does not mean one’s affinity to a state but rather one’s affinity to an ethnic group like Russian, Tatar, Yukaghir, etc.

This example is a pseudo-double-subject sentence too. The possessive relation between *saka* (cat) and *sofina* (ear) is felt, but the relation is not encoded as such in this sentence. If you use the possessive construction, you get the following:

- (66) Maranitra    ny=    sofina≠ny=    saka  
Keen            the=    ear≠the=    cat  
‘Cats ears are keen’

The possessive noun phrase *sofina≠ny saka* (ear≠the= cat) is preceded by a definite article to make it the subject of the sentence.

- (67) Marary            valahana/lamosina            aho  
sick                loins/back                    I  
‘My loins/back ache(s) lit. I am loin-wise/back-wise sick’

This example is again a pseudo-double-subject sentence. The possessive relation between *aho* (I) and *valahana* (loins)/*lamosina* (back) is felt, but the relation is not encoded as such in this sentence. If you use the possessive construction, you get the following:

- (68) Marary            ny=            valaha=ko/lamosi=ko  
sick                the=            loins=my/back=my  
‘My loins/back ache(s)’

The possessive noun phrase *valaha=ko* (loins=my)/*lamosi=ko* (back=my) is preceded by a definite article to make it the subject of the sentence.

- (69) Baribary            maso    ilay    vehivavy  
Round.and.big    eye    the    woman  
‘The woman has round and big eyes lit. the woman is eye-wise round and big’

This example is again a pseudo-double-subject sentence. The possessive relation between *vehivavy* (woman) and *maso* (eye) is felt, but the relation is not encoded as such in this sentence. If you use the possessive construction, you get the following:

- (70) Baribary            ny=            maso=n≠ilay    vehivavy  
Round.and.big    the=            eye=LK<sup>12)</sup>≠the    woman  
‘The woman’s eyes are round and big’

---

12) The linker =n (LK) is employed where it is allowed by the phonology to be inserted in the possessive construction. In the case of *sofina≠ny= saka* (ear≠the= cat) (66), there is no space where a potential linker =n (LK) can be inserted. A theoretical zero linker is not postulated like in a possible notation *sofina=0≠ny= saka* (ear=LK≠the= cat) in this paper.

The possessive noun phrase *maso=n<sup>≠</sup>ilay vehivavy* (eye=LK=the woman) is preceded by a definite article to make it the subject of the sentence.

- (71) Tsy      ampy    bokotra   roa      ilay      lobaka  
Not      enough   button   two      the      shirt  
'The shirt lacks two buttons lit. the shirt is two-button-wise insufficient'

This example is in pseudo-double-subject construction and the unmarked oblique noun phrase is composed of two words *bokotra roa* (button two).

- (72) Kely      maso    sy=      sofina   ilay      vehivavy  
Small   eye      and=      ear      the      woman  
'The woman's eyes and ears are small lit. the woman is eye-wise and ear-wise small'

This example is in pseudo-double-subject construction and the unmarked oblique noun phrase is composed of three words *maso sy= sofina* (eye and= ear). The felt possessiveness can be expressed overtly as in the following example:

- (73) Kely      ny=      maso    sy=      ny=      sofin<sup>≠</sup>ilay    vehivavy  
Small   the=      eye      and=      the=      ear<sup>≠</sup>the      woman  
'The woman's eyes and ears are small'

The three-word noun phrase can be put in the possessive construction too: *ny= maso sy= ny= sofin<sup>≠</sup>ilay vehivavy* (the= eye and= the= ear=the woman). Note that both *maso* and *sofin(a)* is preceded by a definite article each.

- (74) Tsara    tarehy   ny=      zava<sup>≠</sup>maitso    aty      Kôbe  
Good   face   the=      thing<sup>≠</sup>green   here      PN  
'Here in Kobe, the plants are beautiful'

In this example (74), *zava<sup>≠</sup>maitso* (thing<sup>≠</sup>green, plant) is the subject and the *tarehy* (face) is the unmarked oblique noun phrase. But in this case, *tsara tarehy* (good face, beautiful) is a lexicalized collocation, which is often used together. The equivalents of *tsara tarehy* (good face = beautiful) are shown for Malagasy Sign Language (TTM) in (95, 98-101) in section 3.

## 2. 5. A bare noun phrase following the predicate (sectional conclusion)

The unmarked bare nominals right after the predicate can be classified into indefinite object (2.1.), indefinite means (of transportation/motion) (2.2.), indefinite core nominal in the existential construction (2.3.), and semantic possessee in pseudo-double-subject construction. One or more examples for each classification above are given below.

Let us start with an example of an indefinite object (2.1.) (75).

- (75) Misotro      ronono    ny=      anikizy (= 25)    (actor voice = antipassive of object voice 76)  
       Drink        milk      the=      child  
       ‘The child(ren) drink(s) milk’

This example (75) is in the actor voice (cf. fn. 8) and the *ronono* is the indefinite object of the actor-voice verb *misotro* (drink). This sentence can be transformed into the object-voice form as follows:

- (76) Sotro-in≠ny=      ankizy      ny=      ronono    (object voice = passive of actor voice 75)  
       Drink-OV≠the=    child(ren)    the=      milk  
       ‘The milk is drunk by the child(ren) or as for the milk, the child(ren) drink(s) it’

From a point of view, the object voice can be seen as the passive voice of the actor voice whereas the actor voice can be seen as the antipassive voice of the object voice. If you consider (75) as the antipassive of (76), the interpretation that the bare noun phrase (the caseless and determinerless) *ronono* (milk) is an oblique nominal seems valid, e.g. in Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Miyaoaka 2015), a transitive object in the absolutive case (77) is demoted to the ablative-modalis case (78) in the corresponding antipassive construction.

- (77) Angute-m          kuvya-ni                  allg-aa (transitive)          (Yup’ik, Miyaoaka 2015: 347)  
       Man-REL.SG      net-ABS.3REFL.SG    tear-IND.3A.3P  
       ‘The man tore his own net’

- (78) Angun              kuvya-minek          allg-i-uq (antipassive)      (Yup’ik, Miyaoaka ibid.)  
       Man.ABS.SG      net-ABM.3REFL.SG    tear-ANTIPASS-IND.3S  
       ‘The man tore his own net unintentionally’

Miyaoaka (ibid.) explains that the antipassive construction marks the unintentionality in this example. Vigus (2018) explains that the antipassive construction can mark less-individuated patient (LIP) and less-affected patient (LAP) across languages. Malagasy bare-nominal indefinite object (72) can be explained with the labels less-individuated patient and less-affected patient. Unintentionality, on the other hand, can be more likely encoded by VOA-object voice, i.e. subclass of object voice marked with the prefix *voa-*, in Malagasy as in (79):

- (79) Voa-fandrik=o    ilay      biby  
       VOA-trap=I      the      animal  
       ‘I trapped an animal (without really aiming at it)’

It means that the rabbit came to be trapped in the trap without the speaker’s aiming at the individual animal.

Let us look at an example of indefinite means of transportation/motion (2.2.) (80):

- (80) Mandeha lamasinina/tongotra Raso (= 49)  
Go train/foot PN  
‘Raso goes on a train/on foot’

In this example (80), caseless and determinerless *lamasinina* (train) and *tongotra* (foot) are used for indefinite means of transportation/motion<sup>13)</sup>. It should be clear that the caseless and determinerless noun phrase serves as an oblique nominal in the sense of instrumental case nominals in languages where there is such a case and in the sense of an adpositional phrase (PP) in languages where they use adpositional phrases for such meanings.

- (81) Mikołaj jedzie samochodem (Polish)  
PN go.IND.3SG car-INST.SG  
‘Mikołaj goes by car’

- (82) Ona edet na mashin-e (Russian)  
She go.IND.3SG on car-LOC.SG  
‘She is driving/riding a car’

In the Polish example (81), the means of transportation is marked with the instrumental case while the means of transportation is marked by a preposition in Russian (82). The means of transportation/motion can be expressed by an incorporated noun without case marking etc. too (83).

- (83) Dineh na-tɨ́t-t-è-t-ʒ'ah (Upper Tanana Athabaskan)  
Indian.man ITER-cane-INCEP-PF-VM-go<sup>14)</sup>  
‘The Indian man walked around with a cane’

What the incorporated noun stem *tɨ́t* (cane) in Upper Tanana and the bare noun phrase in Malagasy have in common is that they are not marked for case or for semantic role in any way.

Let us look at an example of bare core nominal in the existential sentences (2.3.) (84):

- (84) Misy varavarankely lehibe ity efitra ity (= 52)  
Exist window big this room this  
‘This room has a big window’

In this example (84), the caseless noun which is sandwiched by determiners (demonstratives),

13) Of course *tongotra* (foot/feet) belongs to Raso, but linguistically it is not marked definite.

14) Upper Tanana does not have a single perambulative prefix like Ahtna *lu-*, but a similar “aspect” is encoded with the combination of iterative *na-* plus inceptive *t-*. The iterative *na-* requires that the valency marker to change from *0-* to *t-* (< Proto-Athabaskan *\*ʔə-*).

which is an antitopic at the end of the sentence, is the subject and at the same time denotes the locus whereas the caseless and determinerless noun phrase marks what is in existence.

When you look at some of other languages, the noun phrase expressing what exists in the existential sentences behave peculiarly (i.e. not as a prototypical subject) in many languages. What exists is in the patient position in French (85) and in German (86):

(85) Il y a des gens différents (French, Véronique Sanson)  
It there has some people different  
‘There are different people’

(86) Es gibt in der Nähe einen Parkplatz (German, Doitsugo Jôtatsuhô 2014)  
It gives in the vicinity a.ACC parking.lot  
‘There is a parking lot nearby’

In English, the pre-verbal subject position is taken by the expletive *there* as in (87):

(87) There is a new restaurant near here

In Japanese, the subject usually takes the non-topic nominative *ga* (NOM) as in (88):

(88) Ka ga iru  
Mosquito NOM exist  
‘There is/are (a) mosquito(es)’

On the other hand, when the subject is higher in the topicality hierarchy, it takes *wa* (TOP) as in (89):

(89) Kami wa iru  
God TOP exist  
‘God exists’

In Russian, a non-topic subject occurs postverbally (90):

(90) V ètoj komnate est’ dva okna (Russian, Asazuma et al. 2016)  
In this.LOC room.LOC exist two.NOM windows.GEN  
‘In this room there are two windows’

On the other hand, a topic subject occurs preverbally (91):

(91) Bog est’ (Russian)  
God.NOM exist  
‘God exists’

The *ga* (NOM)-*wa* (TOP) opposition in Japanese (88, 89) and whether what is in existence is

placed post-verbally (90) or pre-verbally (91) in Russian nicely correspond with each other. Topic subjects behave like regular subjects (89, 91).

Finally, let us go back to an example of the pseudo-double-subject sentences in Malagasy (2.4.) (92):

- (92) Maranitra    sofina    ny=    saka    (= 65)  
Keen            ear        the=    cat  
'Cats have keen ears lit. the cats are ear-wise keen'

At a quick glance, this example (92) looks like a double-subject sentence seen in Japanese (1.1.), Bahasa Indonesia (1.2.), and Chinese (1.3.). But this is not a double-subject sentence because \**maranitra sofina* (keen ear) is not a grammatical sentence in Malagasy. Only when a determiner is added to the *sofina* (ear) as in *maranitra ny sofina* (keen the ear = the ears are keen), it becomes a grammatical sentence. Considering these factors, I concluded in the section 2.4. that the bare noun phrase like *sofina* (ear) in (85) is semantically an indefinite oblique nominal.

To sum it up, the bare nominals in (75, 80, 84, 92) are all indefinite as for grammatical marking. The noun phrase after the existential verb (84) is oblique in the sense that it is not a nominative subject which should have a determiner(s) in Malagasy (cf. 85-91 and the discussion around them). Means of transportation/motion (80) can be called oblique in meaning. If the actor-voice transitive example (75) can be considered antipassive of the object-voice counterpart (76), the bare noun phrase can be possibly considered to have oblique properties although it is not overtly marked for the obliqueness in Malagasy. Finally, the bare noun phrase in pseudo-double-subject sentence (85) seems to have oblique properties. The bare noun phrases right after the predicate are all indefinite. The meaning or the semantic role of the indefinite noun phrase is determined by the classification of the predicate it follows.

The situation where the meaning or the semantic role of a noun phrase is determined by the choice and combination of the predicate and the noun phrase reminds me of the similar situation in an "isolating" language, Thai (Mitani 1989):

- (93) Phǒm    pay        rǒtfay  
I            go        train  
'I go by train'
- (94) Phǒm    pay        Krunghthêp  
I            go        Bangkok  
'I go to Bangkok'

The bare noun phrase can be a means of transportation (93) or a destination (94) among other things.

### 3. A triple-subject sentence in Malagasy Sign Language (TTM)

Several years ago, I found an example of triple-subject sentence in Tenin’ny Tanana Malagasy (TTM, Malagasy Sign Language).

- (95) RABE FIARA TSARA TAREHY<sup>15)</sup> (TTM)  
PN car good face  
‘Rabe’s car is good-looking’

If you employ Liu’s (2010) notation strategy, the sentence above can be elaborated as follows:

- (96) RABE FIARA TSARA TAREHY (TTM)  
PN car good face  
SUBJ PRED \_\_\_\_\_ (root clause)  
SUBJ PRED \_\_\_\_\_ (inner clause)  
PRED SUBJ (innermost clause)  
‘Rabe’s car is good-looking’

RABE (PN) is the subject of the root clause while FIARA TSARA TAREHY (car good face) is the predicate of the root clause. Then FIARA (car) is the subject of the nested (inner) clause while TSARA TAREHY (good face) is the predicated of the nested (inner) clause. Moreover, TAREHY (face) is the subject of the nested (innermost) clause while TSARA (good) is the predicate of the nested (innermost) clause<sup>16)</sup>. In this way, three subjects in a sentence are observed. RABE, FIARA, TAREHY can be all considered subjects in TTM unlike in Malagasy because TTM does not have the obligatory definite marking for the subject.

I have been thinking that TTM usually has possessee-possessor (NG) order, which is similar to Malagasy, while possessor-possessee (GN) order, which is foreign to Malagasy, can be seen in the topic area at the beginning of a sentence. In (95), RABE FIARA (PN car) has the possessor-possessee (GN) order and is in the sentence-initial topic area. In this case, the possessor (RABE (PN))-possessee (FIARA (car)) connection is felt, but is not marked in any way. The following example (97) has the possessor-possessee (GN) order in the topic area, i.e. in the beginning of the sentence:

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15) TTM data are from my field research mostly in Antananarivo between the years 2004 and 2019 mostly from my language consultant Mme Raobelina Nivo Haingo Holy Tiana Eva. TTM signs are represented by Malagasy labels although Malagasy words and TTM signs do not always correspond to each other one-to-one. Where the reference is stated, the example has been published previously. Where (TTM 2021) is written, my language consultant has been consulted by SMS. The syntagmatic relationships among the signs can be communicated in this way, but non-manual markers cannot be recorded.

16) *Tsara tarehy* (good face = beautiful) is a loan expression from Malagasy, which can be seen in (74) for Malagasy.



- (97) FANJAKANA    TARATASY    ATAOVY    TEHIRIZO (TTM)  
Government    paper    IMP    keep.OV.IMP  
'Do keep official documents from the government well' (Minoura 2012: 165)

FANJAKANA TARATASY (government paper) has the possessor-possessee (GN) order and is in the sentence-initial topic area of the sentence. ATAOVY is the imperative auxiliary in TTM, which is foreign to Malagasy. TEHIRIZO (keep(IMP)) may be marked with imperative non-manual markers, but it may not be marked so because there is the imperative auxiliary which clearly shows the sentence is in the imperative mood.

As I cannot go to Madagascar to pursue fieldwork right at the moment nor can I use video chat with my language consultant for various reasons, I used Facebook Messenger (SMS) to elicit TTM Examples of double-subject sentences using Malagasy labels. It was such an eye-opening moment. My language consultant, M<sup>me</sup> Eva came up with the following examples after I asked for examples without the RABE (PN) in (95).

- (98) FIARA    TAVA<sup>17)</sup>    TSARA (TTM 2021)  
Car    face    good  
'The car is good-looking'

- (99) TSARA    FIARA    TAVA (TTM 2021)  
Good    car    face  
'The car is good-looking'

- (100) IO    FIARA    TSARA    TAVA (TTM 2021)  
The    car    good    face  
'The car is good-looking'

- (101) TAVA    TSARA    FIARA (TTM 2021)  
Face    good    car  
'The car is good-looking'

My "possessor-possessee (GN) order in the topic area" theory was completely refuted. The rule just does not hold in these examples. In (98), you seem to be witnessing the "possessor-possessee (GN) order in the (sentence-initial) topic area. Then when you look at (99), the same "possessor-possessee (GN) order seems to be in the sentence-final antitopic area. Then in (100), the possessor FIARA (car) and

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17) TAREHY (face) and TAVA (face) correspond to the same TTM sign. M<sup>me</sup> Eva used the label TAREHY (face) at one point, but used TAVA (face) in recent communication. I have not tried to decide to give a single label to each sign in the TTM lexicon yet, but I follow M<sup>me</sup> Eva's preferences at the time.

TAVA (face) are split. But that is still the same as a part of what we had in (95). In (101), TAVA (face) and FIARA (car) are split, but in the opposite order from (100). It probably means that these examples (98-101) are truly the examples of double-subject sentences and the syntactic possessive marking in TTM, i.e. the contiguity and the set order of possessor and possessee (GN), can be unimportant unlike in some Malagasy sentences. On the other hand, TAVA (face) and TSARA (good) are contiguous in (98, 100, 101), but has TAVA TSARA (face good) order in (98, 101) and TSARA TAVA (good face) order in (100). This time around, TSARA (good) and TAVA (face) are split in (99). TTM seems to have a “mobile”-like syntax to some extent. Moreover, none of the four sentences are possible in spoken/written Malagasy as such if you translate word (sign) by word from TTM to Malagasy. What I have to do in the future is to videotape these examples and check the non-manual markers and other prosodic hints.

I asked M<sup>mc</sup> Raivo for Malagasy translation of (95).

(102) Tsara tarehy ny= fiarakodia=n≠dRabe (Malagasy)  
Good face the= car=of≠PN  
'Rabe's car is good-looking'

(103) Ity ny= fiarakodia tsara tarehy an-dRabe<sup>18)</sup> (Malagasy)  
This the car good face ACC-PN  
'Rabe's good-looking car is this'

The example (102) has two arguments *tarehy* (face) and *fiarakodia=n≠dRabe* (car=of≠PN). It happens to pattern with Malagasy pseudo-double-subject sentences (2.4.). The example (103) is just an NP (equational) sentence where *ny= fiarakodia tsara tarehy an-dRabe* (Rabe's good-looking car) is a single argument and the predicate is *ity* ((is) this). Malagasy cannot have a triple-subject sentence, but possession and other kinds of syntactic relations have to be encoded unlike in TTM.

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18) Instead of *fiarakodia tsara tarehy an-dRabe* (car good face ACC-PN), one can expect *fiarakodia tsara tarehi=n≠dRabe* (car good face=LK-PN) with a linker. But because the potential host of the enclitic phrase =n≠dRabe, which would be a three-word phrase *fiarakodia tsara tarehi* (car good face) was too big to be encliticized onto, M<sup>mc</sup> Raivo chose a non-clitic *an-dRabe* (ACC-PN) to express the possessor. A possessor expressed by accusative exists in Malagasy as in *an-dRabe ny= satroka* (ACC=PN the= hat, the hat is mine) where the possessive *an-dRabe* (ACC-PN) is the predicate. In (73), *ny maso sy= ny= sofin≠ilay vehivavy* (the eye and= the= ear≠the woman, the woman's eyes and ears), the host is even longer with five words. But this host is a coordinate phrase while the host in (103) *fiarakodia tsara tarehy* (car good face) includes an embedded relative clause *tsara tarehy* (good face = beautiful). Perhaps not the number of words in the host but the complexity is relevant in the choice between the regular possessor *≠ilay vehivavy* ((of) the woman, 73) and *an-dRabe* (ACC-PN, 101).

## Conclusion

The most important question in this paper is whether Malagasy has a double-subject construction. Malagasy has a construction which can be called a pseudo-double-subject construction, but it differs from double-subject constructions in languages which have double-subject construction. In the course of researching the pseudo-double-subject construction in Malagasy and related phenomena, it was made clear that bare (i.e. caseless and determinerless) noun phrase is the key to all these constructions.

The bare (i.e. caseless and determinerless) noun phrases right after the predicate are all indefinite in Malagasy by form and definition. They are classified into indefinite object (2.1.), indefinite means of transportation/motion (2.2.), indefinite core nominal in the existential construction (2.3.), and semantic possessee in pseudo-double-subject construction (2.4.). The bare noun phrases can be interpreted to have oblique properties as elaborated throughout the whole of the section 2. The obliqueness of the bare noun phrase varies from seemingly just atypical subject (or core nominal) in existential construction (2.3.) to bare noun phrase interpreted as indefinite object (2.1.), indefinite means of transportation/motion (2.2.), and semantic possessee in pseudo-double-subject construction (2.4.).

Malagasy does not have true double-subject construction unlike Japanese, Bahasa Indonesia, or Mandarin Chinese. On the other hand, Malagasy Sign Language (TTM) has even a triple-subject sentence as presented in the section 3. on top of double-subject sentences.

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